



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

IN REPLY REFER TO: B-197956 (THK)

August 8, 1980

The Honorable Peter W. Rodino
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

By letter of February 26, 1980, you requested our comments on H.R. 5687, 96th Cong., 1st Sess., entitled: "A Bill for the relief of Michael G. Macdonald."

The bill provides that the Secretary of the Treasury shall pay Mr. Macdonald the sum of \$8,700.60 in full satisfaction of his claims for demurrage charges paid by him for dockside storage of his household goods and personal effects in London, England.

Our records show that when Mr. Macdonald was assigned to the United States Embassy, London, England, on June 30, 1975, as Political-Military Attache, he experienced delay in moving into suitable housing because the necessary approvals for a Government lease extended over several months. Mr. Macdonald's claim for storage charges in excess of the 60-day period authorized by paragraph 2-8.2c of the Federal Travel Regulations was subsequently disallowed by our Claims Division on March 15, 1979, on the grounds that the regulations in question had the force and effect of law and our Office could not waive them.

The record before us also indicates that it was difficult to obtain suitable housing for Mr. Macdonald near the Embassy and Whitehall so that he could properly carry out his official tasks. Moreover, there appears to have been delays due to the Embassy's rejection of several houses for leasing and delay by the Department of Defense in committing funds for a lease. Under such circumstances we do not believe that Mr. Macdonald could reasonably have moved his household goods from dockside storage until the Government leased a home. Therefore, we recommend enactment of H.R. 5687.

Sincerely yours,

For The Comptroller General
of the United States

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Digest

Enactment of H.R. 5687, 96th Cong., 1st Sess, "A Bill for the relief of Michael G. Macdonald," is recommended. Bill proposes payment of temporary storage charges in excess of 60 days incident to assignment of employee to position of Political-Military Attache in London, England. Excess charges resulted from Embassy's delays in approving house to be rented by Government and Department of Defense's delay in committing funds for lease.